

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF WHAT YOU KNOW

April 11, 2013

Thank you Chairwoman Price & members of the Committee:

I'd like to start out by noting for the record that I've worked with countless government officials since the late 80s.... And after all that, I can say this: They have thankless jobs. Most of them work hard and are well-intentioned. They're under a lot of pressure right now. They deserve our thanks.

But having said that, government officials are saying that because fewer people read newspapers, the state ought to allow them to post notices on their own websites. Some facts might be in order here:

Fact: A 2012 nationwide survey proved that 62 percent adults read a PRINT newspaper each week. Readership in many Michigan markets is even higher (note handout #1).

Fact: a survey conducted by the firm that does research for GM, Coca-Cola, Proctor & Gamble and General Electric (AOR, 2009) showed that 95% of 18-29 year old Michigan residents read a print or online newspaper every week.

Fact: A 2011 poll conducted by EPIC/MRA showed that 61% of Michigan voters oppose allowing government to forgo placing "public notices" in newspapers and instead place them on a government web site. The same survey also showed that nearly 70 percent of voters rarely visit a government web site.

Nonetheless, government groups say its OK stop running these notices in newspapers and post them on their own website. They say the argument that there are a lot of people who don't have home computers doesn't matter because those people can go to their local library. But the facts say something else.

Fact: A 2010 survey showed 89% of households never go to a public library to use computers to access information about local or state government. **Here's another fact:** These local government groups are spending taxpayer dollars to hire lobbyists to sell you on the idea that allowing them to post notices on their own website will save money. The funny thing is they admit 1. They don't update their web sites much and 2. They want MORE MONEY FROM THE STATE to run their websites (note handout #2). What they're NOT telling you is there are additional costs involved in posting these notices.

Let's face it: It costs money to buy a server. It costs money to program it. It costs money to keep it running. I've provided handouts with examples showing these sites STILL GO DOWN OR CAN BE HACKED (note handout #3). And if they go down or are hacked there are then additional costs involved in litigating the legitimacy of those notices. Look at what happened in Worth Township (note handout #4).

Government groups won't tell you that. But they will tell you that it costs between 3 and 6 million dollars to publish these notices. But think about this: When you look at the fact that there are currently 1,858 units of government in Michigan and divide the purported cost of publishing public notices, it breaks down to \$1615-\$3229/ municipality per year. Between sixteen and thirty two hundred bucks a year.... Think about that for a moment. And then think about how small these amounts are compared to total operational budgets (note handout #5).

That seems like a relatively small amount to give proof positive "BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT" inform Michigan taxpayers of actions that have tens of millions of dollars of impact on taxpayers.

More to the point: These government groups claim they spend too much on public notices in newspapers and if they can't do that that they need to cut police and fire. They make it an either or issue. No ifs, ands or buts. I'd like to suggest that there ARE other ways these government groups reduce costs. Such as:

- Reducing the \$5,500 spent on baseball umpires in Niles. Niles spent \$2,622.11 on notices. Does Niles think baseball umpires are more important than protecting property from foreclosure?

- Meridian Township financing employee computers for personal use (note handout #6).

- Lobbying reports on the Michigan Secretary of State Web site show that in 2012 Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Townships Association spent a combined \$166,000 on lobbying expenses for things other than mailings and food. These groups are the tip of the iceberg when examining the amount of money local units of government are spending for lobbying. One multi-client firm in Lansing alone represents over 21 different governmental groups from counties, to cities and drain commissions. One city paid this firm over \$16,000 to lobby for them in Lansing last year. Maybe cutting the layers of lobbyists might be more prudent than eliminating firemen and police or weakening the public's ability to know what their government is doing.

- Scaling back their three night stays at four-star hotels for conferences that feature "All day shopping sprees," *Cirque Dreams Illumination* at DeVos Performance Hall and "Culinary Delight at Fredrick Meijer Gardens (note handout #7). The MI Townships Assoc. ran up a \$250,000 bill on sleeping rooms for that three-night event. Newspapers in Michigan used to hold TWO-night conferences... but had to scale back to 1-day events and webinars when the state's economy went bad. So here's an idea to save some of the precious tax dollars these municipalities claim they want to save: do what newspapers and other businesses do: hold a webinar.

Some would say that those examples are reason enough to walk away from this legislation. But there's a more fundamental reason why such legislation is bad public policy. While I'm sure these government officials mean well, the fact of the matter is that these groups are setting up a system that's akin to allowing a fox to guard a hen house. **Keeping an independent and proof positive "beyond the shadow of a doubt" model intact with these notices makes sense.** That's what newspapers do. What the Counties, Townships and MIL want you to do is have government take a function away from private industry. And THAT is reverse privatization.

REVERSE PRIVATIZATION... where GOVERNMENT GAINS A CHOKEHOLD ON INFORMATION. If you allow government to post these notices on a government website, then there is no independent and UNHACKABLE PROOF of how taxpayers' due process rights are addressed. Please carefully read Newaygo County Clerk Morey Butler's letter.

Why would anybody want to create a model where THAT could happen here?

All this reminds me of a 2004 House Committee on Education hearing where (then Rep. & now S.O.S.) Ruth Johnson proposed legislation to reform FOIA in order to make intermediate School Districts more transparent. Several ISD officials said that they resented the bill's implication that they weren't trustworthy. And THAT prompted a comment from then Rep. Ken Bradstreet (R-Gaylord) that I think is worth remembering today: "Our nation was founded on the principal of distrustful government."

Citizens need an independent check and balance on the government that's supposed to serve them. What the MIL, MTA and MAC are pushing for – government posting notices on their own websites – takes that away.

Please..... Don't let that happen.

Mike MacLaren

Executive Director : Michigan Press Association
827 N. Washington Ave. : Lansing, MI 48906-5199 V: 517-372-2424 : www.michiganpress.org

H:\MPA\LEGIS\Public Notice\2013 Government Control Of What You Know.Docx

①

Mike MacLaren

Subject: FW: Readership information

From: Lisa McGraw
Sent: Friday, March 01, 2013 3:41 PM
To: ssofia@house.mi.gov
Cc: Mike MacLaren; dirkmill@aol.com
Subject: Readership information

Sherry,

Below is some Michigan specific information regarding newspaper readership that we've gathered from some of our members this week.

For adults in the areas below:

- 72% print readership in Grand Rapids
- 80.8% print readership in Kalamazoo
- 77.5% print readership in Muskegon
- 84% in Bay City... 77% in Flint... 72% in Saginaw
- In the Detroit DMA, 59.3% of adults read a print newspaper in the past week and in the greater Lansing, DMA, 57% of adults read a print newspaper in the past week.

All of this is AUDITED data (Scarborough, 2012)

Nationwide, 62% of the adult population (147,118,528 out of 236,610,692) read a printed newspaper in the last week.

The following article tells an interesting story: <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/mediawire/201042/newspaper-readers-are-not-graying-as-quickly-as-reported/>

I hope all of this is helpful. Please let me know if you need more information.

Also, if you ever find out who gave Representative Price the 7% number I'd really like to know so we can send them some information.

Thanks for everything...

Lisa

Lisa McGraw, Public Affairs Manager
Michigan Press Association



He also cited testimony from past Secretaries of State, saying their comments showed there has never been any evidence of voter misrepresentation in Michigan.

He called the three bills "an assault on minority voting rights in Michigan" and said they are "part of a national pattern and practice of trying to suppress the minority vote before the Nov. 6 election."

The rules for voting in Michigan are already clear, he said.

"What we have now is a very straightforward process that works, and there is no evidence it doesn't work, so what is it we are trying to prevent? And why are we trying to prevent it?" Hollowell asked the committee.

Several groups put in cards today in opposition to certain bills. Equality Michigan and ACLU both opposed SB 0751, SB 0754 and SB 0803. AFL-CIO and AARP both opposed SB 0751 and SB 0754.

Other bills in the package now being considered by the House Redistricting and Elections Committee have found bipartisan support. SB 0750, SB 0752 and SB 0753 all passed the Senate with unanimous votes.

SB 0750, sponsored by Robertson, would modify fines for failing to file campaign finance statements.

SB 0752, sponsored by Sen. Geoff **HANSEN** (R-Hart), would require minor political parties to provide notice of a county caucus or state convention to nominate candidates.

SB 0753, sponsored by Sen. Jack **BRANDENBURG** (R-Harrison Twp.), would create sentencing guidelines for certain campaign finance crimes.

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Bill Aims To Clarify Local Meeting Notices

A bill aimed at making sure the public knows about emergency local government meetings came under some scrutiny today as the question was raised about whether it might unintentionally take focus away from dealing with whatever disaster is at hand.

The House Oversight, Reform and Ethics Committee today heard testimony on HB 5459, which would require public bodies to follow certain procedures if its members were holding an emergency session.

One of those procedures would be trying to post notice of the session on a website.

Bill sponsor Rep. Paul **OPSOMMER** (R-DeWitt) said the bill would not require every local government to have a website. For those that do have a website however, they should make an attempt to post the notice of the meeting, he said.

Bill **ANDERSON**, legislative liaison for the Michigan Townships Association (MTA), expressed concern about townships that do not have easy ways to update their websites. Some of them only update their websites every few years as local elected officials change, he said.

"Their only way to respond to this is to take down that website so they don't have to comply with that section of the law," he said.

Anderson emphasized MTA supports the intent to post notices in a public place.

"That is what we teach every township official . . . and we will never deviate from that," Anderson said.

Committee Chair Rep. Tom **MC MILLIN** (R-Rochester Hills) said to Anderson it is "not a big deal" to post documents to a website.

He said townships to some extent "need to realize we are in the 21st century" and they "may want to spend a few bucks" to upgrade their websites.

Anderson told McMillin if the Legislature wanted to appropriate the money for that, that would be fine.

Anderson also said MTA also has concerns the timeline suggested in the bill could unintentionally result in public bodies becoming wrapped up in following procedure instead of focusing on an emergency at hand.

"Put the onus after the emergency has passed," he said.

Opsommer emphasized that his bill was aimed at making sure the public has access to information about public body meetings.

Under the Open Meetings Act, a public body must issue a public notice at least 18 hours before it meets. However, a public body can meet in an emergency session "in the event of a severe and imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the public when two-thirds of the members serving decide that delay would be detrimental to efforts to lessen or respond to the threat," according to the House Fiscal Agency.

HB 5459 would retain those provisions and specify that before a public body held an emergency meeting that failed to comply with the 18-hour notice requirement, it would be required to notify the local county commission of its intent.

It would also require that notices must be accessible by the public for the entire 18 hours if they are posted.

MIRS CAPITOL CAPSULE, TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2012

[View Printable Version](#)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In spite of having almost no campaign presence around Michigan, Pete 'Spend-it-Nor' has magically turned into Pete 'Spends All He's Got.'"
- Michigan Democratic Party Chair Mark BREWER, poking fun at Pete HOEKSTRA's U.S. Senate campaign slogan and his campaign's high burn rate from the first quarter of 2012.

INSIDE TODAY'S MIRS:

- **Richardville Wants PPT Bills Done By Summer Break**
- **Brown To Run For Oakland County Clerk**
- **Hoekstra Campaign Spent What It Raised In 1Q**
- **Senate Dems: PPT Reform Part Of \$3B Biz Tax Giveaway**
- **Annunzio-Agema Tussle Over National Popular Vote**
- **Armstrong Case Against Shrivell Going To Trial**
- **Emergency Manager For MCCA?**
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- **Bill Aims To Clarify Local Meeting Notices**
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- **Public Acts**
- **House Action Report**
- **Senate Action Report**

 = **Track bill or resolution with MIRS Bill Hound System.**

Richardville Wants PPT Bills Done By Summer Break

Senate Majority Leader Randy **RICHARDVILLE** (R-Monroe) today said he wants the Personal Property Tax (PPT) reform package on the Governor's desk before summer break.

"I personally think we shouldn't leave this summer without having that issue addressed completely," Richardville told reporters today. "Now does that mean that the Governor signs it before we leave this summer? Ideally, yeah... I know that a lot of people who are pro-business, pro-job want to take a vote on this before the summer."

The eight-bill package (SB 1065, SB 1066, SB 1067, SB 1068, SB 1069, SB 1070, SB 1071 and SB 1072) spearheaded by Senate Finance Chair Jack **BRANDENBURG** (R-Hartson Twp.) was introduced today (See "PPT Repeal Bills Prepped For Tuesday Intro," 4/16/12).

Richardville called it "one of the most significant" things the Legislature is working on.

The total revenue from the current PPT is \$1.2 billion per year. The package introduced today ultimately eliminates approximately \$470 million per year once it is fully implemented, which wouldn't be until 2022.

MIRS has learned that the bills weren't initially on the fast track, as there were some concerns that both the PPT and the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) could be politically damaging for House Republicans up for re-election this fall. But Brandenburg and House and Senate leadership have decided to press ahead.

MIRS asked Richardville if the House really wanted to take that vote on the PPT bills. He said he hadn't talked with House Republicans "specifically" about taking a vote, but said he'd be "surprised that they wouldn't, though. I know this is on everybody's agenda." The Majority Leader said this was one thing left outstanding after last year's tax restructuring and business tax cut.

Richardville said "a reasonable timeframe" would be for the package to be on the Senate floor in two to three weeks. He said he expected there to be thorough hearings and amendments to the bills.

Richardville noted that "we're not looking at a full-replacement type of a proposal" but said the proposal is a "reasonable change" in the tax structure.

"I think, in general, our caucus is supportive of the idea of removing a punitive tax on investments," Richardville said. "... We have to be competitive not only with Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, other Midwestern states. We also have

Statewide Headlines

Another View: Ballast
reguirement's step in right
direction
Let health exchange mess be a
federal responsibility
GOP shouldn't shift too far, fast
Michigan bill requires disclosure of
end-of-life treatment policy
Laura Bush, Barbara Bush talk
Grand Rapids
Betty Ford, Margaret Thatcher in
Laura Bush, Barbara Bush talk
Fiscal Problems Not Stopping
Flint From Pursuing \$2.4M
Hydrogen Bus
Flint City Council, mayor's pay
suspended as part of new
emergency manager law
Report: Car repair costs jump
10% in 2012

MIRS MIDDAY UPDATE

CCs, U's Won't Take A RTW Hit Under Senate Bills - 1:36 p.m.

MIRS MIDDAY UPDATE

House Subcommittee Takes Scissors To DHS Budget -- 12:26 p.m.

PRESS RELEASES

The Traverse City Area
Chamber of Commerce invites
its media partners to the next
step in its 2013 S

Beps, Taiib, Kandreyas: DHS
Budget Cuts Endanger Kids,
Families

Registration now open for
DNR's Becoming an
Outdoors-Woman summer
program in Upper Peninsula

Progress Michigan Condemns
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Top Stories



Teena Marie death: Celebs tweet reactions



Editorial: DiVincenzo's club adds new member

Home > New Jersey Real-Time News > Statehouse

N.J. government website is down until further notice

Published: Monday, November 29, 2010, 9:25 PM Updated: Tuesday, November 30, 2010, 5:24 AM

By Statehouse Bureau Staff
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33

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TRENTON — Most of New Jersey's government websites were knocked offline for much of the day today, because of the failure of a cooling unit that's designed to keep state servers from overheating, said Andrew Pratt, a spokesman for the state Department of Treasury.

The cooling unit failure, which occurred in the morning, forced state officials to shut down many state servers to prevent damage from overheating,



Server not found

Firefox can't find the server at state.nj.us.

- Check the address for typing errors such as www.example.com
- If you are unable to load any pages, check your computer's network connection.
- If your computer or network is protected by a firewall or proxy, Firefox is permitted to access the Web.

Try Again

New Jersey's state-run websites, including www.state.nj.us, were unavailable today and returned error messages like the one shown in this screen grab.

01:15 a.m.
3/2/11

The connection has timed out

The server at www.michigan.gov is taking too long to respond.

Try Again

- The site could be temporarily unavailable or too busy. Try again in a few moments.
- If you are unable to load any pages, check your computer's network connection.
- If your computer or network is protected by a firewall or proxy, make sure that Firefox is permitted to access the Web.

Server not found

Firefox can't find the server at www.eatoncounty.gov.

- Check the address for typing errors such as ww.example.com instead of www.example.com
- If you are unable to load any pages, check your computer's network connection.
- If your computer or network is protected by a firewall or proxy, make sure that Firefox is permitted to access the Web.

Try Again

Hackers attack company that runs Nasdaq

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Hackers broke into a Nasdaq service that handles confidential communications for some 300 corporations, the company said Saturday — the latest vulnerability exposed in the computer systems Wall Street depends on.

The intrusions did not affect Nasdaq's stock trading systems and no customer data was compromised, Nasdaq OMX Group Inc. said. Nasdaq is the largest electronic securities trading market in the U.S., with more

than 2,800 listed companies.

A federal official said that hackers broke into the service repeatedly over more than a year. Investigators are trying to identify the hackers, the official said. The motive is unknown. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the inquiry by the FBI and Secret Service is continuing.

The targeted service, Directors Desk, helps companies share documents with directors between scheduled board meetings. It also allows online discussions and Web conferencing

within a board. Since board directors have access to information at the highest level of a company, penetrating the service could be of great value for insider trading.

Nasdaq OMX spokesman Frank DeMaria said the Justice Department had requested that the company keep silent about the intrusion until at least Feb. 14. However, The Wall Street Journal reported the investigation on its website late Friday, prompting Nasdaq to issue a statement and notify its customers.

DeMaria said Nasdaq OMX

detected "suspicious files" during a regular security scan on U.S. servers unrelated to its trading systems and determined that Directors Desk was potentially affected. It pulled in forensic firms and federal law enforcement for an investigation. They found no evidence that customer information was accessed by hackers.

Computer security experts have long warned that many companies aren't doing enough to protect sensitive data, and recent events have underlined the point.

work choices.

our economy. Over 109,000 new, clean-energy jobs have been created in our state as the result of responsible policy

multiple car A recent audit of state employees revealed that they would pay with their jobs.

and easily nn- Perhaps a reading repertoire should include "besides," "Enquire," and "star."

Mike MacLaren

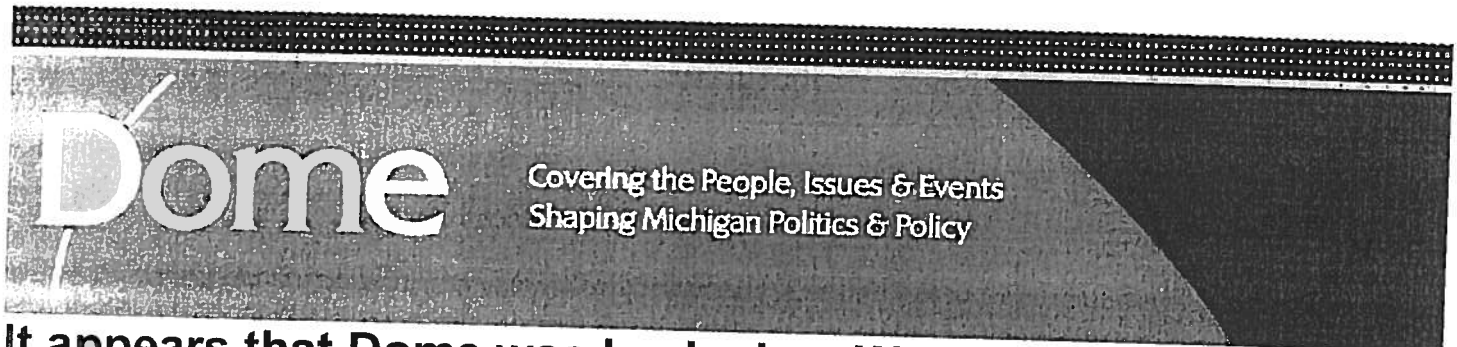
Subject: FW: why legals belong in print

From: Dome magazine [mailto:Dome@domemagazine.com]

Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2010 1:03 AM

To:

Subject: News about Dome website



It appears that Dome was hacked on Wednesday afternoon. The site is being shut down temporarily to assess the damage and make repairs.

You will receive a bulletin when everything is fixed. Until then, we suggest you avoid the site.

We expect, or at least hope, to be able to send out the regular Friday morning bulletin with new columns.

Thanks for your patience.

-- T. Scott

2011-03-18 15:03:52

Freep.com

#4

Posted: Dec. 26, 2010 | Updated: 8:13 p.m. Dec. 26, 2010

Worth Twp. property owners face major tax hike after couple win nearly \$1-million verdict in zoning lawsuit

By TRESA BALDAS
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Things are getting ugly in picturesque Worth Township.

The otherwise quiet resort town along Lake Huron is in an uproar over a nearly \$1-million jury verdict that taxpayers are stuck with -- all because of a screw-up at township hall.

A federal jury in Detroit socked the township with the hefty verdict in August for mistreating a local couple in a zoning dispute that involved renovating a cottage. Trouble is, the township had only \$100,000 in liability insurance, so it was ordered to assess the taxpayers for the rest.

Safe to say, it's war time.

In recent weeks, five billboards have gone up denouncing Township Clerk Marcella Bartniczak, whom some blame for the legal mess. A recall petition is circulating. A Web site has surfaced detailing all the dirt behind the controversy.

"This is a pill that everyone is going to have to swallow," said resident Doug Varty, who launched the recall campaign. "They're furious, absolutely furious."

Not quite, says Bartniczak, who insists that a handful of locals are out to get her.

"It's personal," she said.

Worth Township property owners take action against clerk they blame for loss in zoning suit that will hike taxes

Erecting billboards criticizing her leadership was one thing.

Planting one at the corner where her kids get on the school bus -- well, that went straight for the jugular, says Bartniczak, who is at the center of a growing controversy in this tiny resort town of 4,021 residents along Lake Huron.

A federal jury in Detroit awarded the verdict to a Worth Township couple in August, agreeing they were mistreated by the township during a zoning dispute. Because the township didn't have enough liability insurance to cover the verdict, on Dec. 6 a judge ordered the judgment to be added to next summer's tax bills.

Township officials anticipate it'll cost an extra \$200 per property owner.

Some claim that Bartniczak is the culprit, that it was her actions that led to the hefty verdict and that she failed to get adequate insurance.

A recall campaign is under way to get her out of office. Five billboards have gone up publicizing the verdict, referred to as "Marcy's tax" on one

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Subject:

FW: Three Rivers

Mike MacLaren + Executive Director + Michigan Press Association
827 N. Washington Ave. + Lansing, MI 48906-5199
517-372-2424 + www.michiganpress.org

Fact: 6.9 million Michigan adults (90%) read a print or online newspaper each week.

In 2012, the city of Three Rivers City (population 7,791) had a budget of \$4 million.

In 2012, the city spent \$719.28 on notices in the daily newspaper. (0.00017 percent of budget)

For 2013, the City of Three Rivers budget is \$3.9 million. The city is on track to spend \$3,200 on notices in the daily paper in 2013. (0.00082)

Three Rivers has 2,975 occupied homes. The daily newspaper sells 2,392 copies in town each day. (80.4 % penetration).

I'm working on the similar numbers for Grayling.

Dirk

Spamkiller Identified this as **CLEAN**. Give feedback: [This is SPAM](#) · [More](#)



COMPUTER PURCHASE AGREEMENT

This Agreement made this _____ day of _____, 201__ by and between Meridian Charter Township, a Michigan municipal corporation ("Meridian Township") and _____, an employee of the Meridian Township ("Employee").

WHEREAS, Meridian Township wishes to encourage the proficiency of its employees in the use of personal computers by offering an interest-free loan program to employees for the purchase of a personal computer, software and peripherals. This program will be beneficial to all Meridian Township employees, both personally and professionally, and will be added to the Employee Benefit Plan. It will also benefit Meridian Township to have employees that are proficient in the use of personal computers, and;

WHEREAS, to promote the computer proficiency of its employees, Meridian Township will loan to the Employee up to SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT (75%) of the purchase price of a new personal computer, peripherals and designated software ("New Equipment"), provided, however, that the total amount of the loan shall not exceed TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,000). This paragraph shall hereinafter be referred to as "The Loan", and;

WHEREAS, the Employee understands that the New Equipment must conform to specifications on the authorized Minimum Configuration published by Meridian Township, and that the New Equipment to be purchased must be approved in advance of the purchase by the Meridian Township Computer Specialist in order for the Employee to receive the Loan for reimbursement.

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED:

1. Meridian Township will loan, interest-free, to the Employee the sum of _____ dollars, (not to exceed \$2,000) for a period of up to three years, which represents up to SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT (75%) of the cost of the attached equipment which the employee has purchased and which is in conformance with the attached Minimum Configuration guidelines.
2. The Loan for reimbursement shall be dependent upon the Employee filing proof of purchase of the New Equipment with the Human Resources Office within 14 days of

